Discussion questions for Everyday Use-Do the following.

1. Research and collect some information about the following to help you understand the story: “The Black Power Movement”, “The Nation of Islam”, “Black Feminism”, “Womanism” and “The Black Arts Movement”. These will help you put the story in a historical and cultural context.
2. Identify who the narrator is and comment on how Walker’s choice of the narrator could be significant.
3. Identify how the narrator describes her garden and what this description would signify.
4. What is the importance of the TV show in the story? How does it help us understand Mama and Dee?
5. Comment on Mama’s dream. What could it tell us about the characters and the themes of the story?
6. Identify the physical descriptions of the three women in the story. Make a list of their personality traits. Then discuss what each of these women could symbolize in the story.
7. Comment on the three women’s responses to the fire.
8. What is the importance of the quilt in the story? What does it represent? What does it mean to Dee, Mama and Maggie? Do these three women differ from one another in relation to their perceptions of the quilt? If yes, in what way(s).
9. What could be the significance of quilt making from a black feminist perspective?
10. What is the importance of names in the story? For example, what does “Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo” signify in the story?
11. Discuss the significance of the “churn” in relation to the three women in the story.
12. What could Dee’s taking a Polaroid photograph signify? Why do you think Dee prefers to exclude herself from the photograph?
13. Why does Maggie have a real smile at the end of the story? Comment on the mother’s choice at the end.
14. Why is the story titled “Everyday Use”?
15. Why does the mother compare her daughters to different animals? What does this reveal about her attitudes toward Dee and Maggie?
16. To what extent would you consider the story a critique of the Black Power Movement?